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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 001864

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2019

TAGS: PREL MASS SO AU

SUBJECT: AFRICAN UNION REQUESTS BODYGUARD TRAINING FOR SOMALI, AMISOM TROOPS

REF: VITE-BITTRICK E-MAIL OF 07/30/09

Classified By: JOEL MAYBURY, USAU CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I., REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶11. (U) This cable contains an Action Request. See paragraph ¶5.

¶12. (C) The African Union Commission (AUC) has formally requested USG assistance in providing bodyguard training for a select number of Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) security forces and AMISOM troops. The AUC further requests that the USG choose the venue for the training and pay for training costs. This request for bodyguard training will very likely be raised by Somali President Sheikh Sharif during his planned meeting with the Secretary in Nairobi.

¶13. (C) The AUC briefly lays out its case for bodyguard training in a diplomatic note addressed to the U.S. Embassy on July 28. The Commission notes "a sizable number of Ministers and Parliamentarians of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) of Somalia live outside Somalia as a result of the systematic assassination by forces opposed to the Djibouti Agreement. This is cause for concern to the AUC as there is now an identifiable need to improve the personal safety and security of the said officers so as to enable them to perform their duties in Somalia."

¶14. (C) The diplomatic note continues, "In the light of these developments, the AUC requests the United States of America to provide training as bodyguards to selected TFG and AMISOM TCC (Troop Contributing Countries Uganda and Burundi) troops. It is requested that such training is provided at a venue of choosing by the US Administration and at its own cost."

¶15. (C) Action Request: USAU has already conveyed the essence of the AUC's request to AF/RSA in reftel e-mail. Moreover, we have confirmed with UK Embassy colleagues in Addis Ababa that they have received a similar request from the AUC. We recommend that Washington closely coordinate the USG response to the AUC's request in consultation with the UK.

¶16. (C) As noted in our e-mail to AF/RSA on July 30, the AUC is contemplating an initial group of 100 trainees and a training period of 90 days. At present, TFG ministers and legislators only have what a senior AUC contact described as "escorts."

GONZALES